

GOLF FOR EVERYBODY AT VAN CORTLANDT PARK

Idlers and Working People Alike Found in the Crowds Playing on the Course There—The Players Are Numbered by Hundreds on Holidays and a Third of Them Are Women Enthusiasts

THERE is only a step, and not a long step either, between golf enthusiasts and the bughouse, says Supt. Marrin, who has seen the Van Cortlandt Park golf links develop into the finest municipal golf course in the country, but he expresses the opinion with a grin.

"We got some of that kind here," he adds, "but not many."

links the increase in players has been large, added to which is the steadily growing enthusiasm for the game among working people.

Holiday Crowds Out.

"At one time golf was called the rich man's game," a member of the committee in charge of the links at Van Cortlandt Park said, "and real, downright hard



PART OF GOLF LINKS—VAN CORTLANDT PARK



AT THE GOLF HOUSE

"But when a crackerjack starts in after a beginner he's apt to catch up with him in no time and the congestion gets awful. The starter always tries to hold more, each ticket is numbered in regular rotation. A player who got his ticket after a dozen others can't march past the starter ahead of the others, for the

The superintendent's joke means that the golf season is on at Van Cortlandt Park, that the Bronx Park Commissioner, who offices are in Claremont Park, is being showed under with applications for permits to play, and that neither Mr. Marrin nor his assistants will have any weekend holiday till next October.

Mr. Marrin gallantly leaves women out of his criticism. The players who arrive at daybreak for a round before business hours seldom include a woman. It is not often either that women appear at the official opening hour, 8 o'clock, or rush to the links after business hours to get in a game before dark. More enthusiastic perhaps than formerly, most women patrons still take the pastime mildly.

"When I came here six years ago," said Mr. Marrin, "only a few women appeared on the links in a day, while now about a third of the players are women, and the only fault I have to find with them is that they will wear high heeled shoes. Not all of them of course, but a good many do."

"It's hard on the putting green. The heels sink away down, making holes which the ordinary rakeover won't fill up. You can always tell a good and a bad player by the way he or she treats the putting green."

"How do I know this is the finest public golf course in the country? Because visitors from other cities tell me so. You would be surprised to see the visitors we get from all over the United States during the golf season. These persons don't need to get a special season permit to play from the Commissioner's office. By proving to me that they are strangers to the courtesy of the course is given to them. I have had many of them say to me before starting for home: 'We can't come up to your course in our part of the States and we thought our course was pretty fine too.'"

"I have had New York men tell me that the part of our links covering the meadows is equal to any private course near New York. The men who said this were the kind who think that no one can play a first class game unless every blade of grass is exactly of the same length," and Mr. Marrin gave another good natured grin.

Great Season Expected.

The system which has been developed to fit the needs of New York's greatest golf course and the needs of the players is as interesting as the course itself for the reason that it gives every corner an equal chance and shows no favoritism. If there is one place on earth where men have an equal advantage with women it is at the Van Cortlandt golf links, where first come first served is the inflexible rule.

Players who have been accustomed to start at a point quite close to the clubhouse were surprised to find on the opening day this year that the starting point was a good bit further off, where the old No. 7 used to be, and that the old No. 8 is now No. 18. In going out they will also find that the seventh green has been taken out altogether, making the drive from old No. 7 to No. 8, and in coming in the seventeenth hole is now the new No. 11. Another change received with various degrees of enthusiasm, according to the skill of the player, is the building of a new tee just north of the curlers' lake, making the lake a hazard. The calculation of the committee which decided to have these changes made was that congestion would thereby be avoided in certain places notable for becoming congested, like the old No. 7, but whether it will be merely a question of taking away the congestion at one place and putting it at another cannot be decided till after the season is a week or two advanced.

That this will be the biggest season yet is certain. The secretary over at the Claremont Park headquarters, who keeps tabs on permits, can tell that by the way requests by mail and personal applications are coming in.

"In 1908," the secretary said, "I gave out 1,000 permits. Last year I issued 4,300 permits, only 5 per cent. of which went to the Pelham Bay links. Each of those of course represents or may represent several members of a family."

"At Van Cortlandt 15,000 separate cards were issued to players last season. Since the subway gave a five cent fare to the

workers were inclined to poke fun at it, although it was a pink tea, or something like that. That it ever would be a popular game outside of private links was considered doubtful. The city doubted that it would.

"This question has been settled, and now what we are more particularly interested in is the question what relatively

working people, that is people who wouldn't feel they could afford to belong to a private golf club in the suburbs."

Of all the golf statistics prepared in a season anywhere near New York Supt. Marrin's are by far the most interesting.

"From 600 to 800 players of a Saturday, a Sunday and every holiday is the regular thing now—it was last season, I mean—



WAITING THEIR TURN TO START

done last year. The system had to be worked out, though.

"When I first came here there was no trouble in letting players with a permit go ahead when they pleased or just as soon as they showed their fingers and a starter. But this wouldn't work at all now. Why, on the rush days we start forty or more players every hour from the first tee and every one of

them shows a ticket he got from me when he arrived at the golf house. The starter punches this in space No. 1. After a player makes his second drive and has caught up with the ball the next player is started and so on with the third, good or as bad as any another there never would be any congestion anywhere in the course."

MORE WOMEN RIDE ASTRIDE THAN EVER BEFORE

Continued from Fifth Page.

we formerly viewed her with amazement. But custom has made the innovation familiar and every practical equestrian must appreciate its advantages. The side saddle and the smart habit impress us as graceful and feminine, but is not that merely the effect of conventionality? As to modesty, what so all revealing as the modern tight riding habit? Or what so extraordinary as the riding apron in some of its effects? Surely if we can gaze complacently upon the slight provided whole by our bathing beaches, ballrooms and opera boxes we need not condemn gaiters and breeches. Why strain at the gnat of Puss in Boots and swallow the camel of the hobble skirt?

Advantages Compared. "Here are the advantages and disadvantages respectively of the side saddle and the cross seat. Just compare them:

SIDE SADDLE. Conventional. Safest seat, as long as it stays in place on the horse. The animal always shrinks at exercise. May gall and chafe badly. Must sit well. Weighs three more. Only one kind of side saddle. Wrongly develops body, very generally.

Twists body awkwardly; brings shoulders out of line; dulls cut to mount and dismount unaided. Heavy to handle. Expensive to buy. Dangerous in a fall. Fatigue comes easily from cramped attitude. More likely to horse. Makes many becoming unbecomingly quickly. Cannot be used at all on some horses. Side saddle is not suitable for long rough rides. Horse cannot be made a finished line because of absence of "both legs" effect. Requires a special shape of horse; special attire; special equipment. Stout women had best use side saddle or the cowboy shape if riding astride. Very difficult to saddle one's own horse with side saddle. Side seat is more easy wearing of the rigging. Light. Cheap by comparison. Comparatively safe. Not so in the cross seat. Does not tire as quickly, nor lame as usually. Can be used upon all. Cowboy saddle is an arm chair. Better "hand" as usually, and more comfortable for leg and heel effects. Does not require these. All girls should learn to ride astride, even if they do not do so at ways. Very easy with cross saddle. Cross seat, with horse, boots, breeches and long flaring coat skirts is absolutely obscuring. Astride garb need be neither.

Weights about thirty pounds. Must be replaced as owner grows tall. Except should ride upon one certain side. "The cross seat is not for stout or elderly women." "For security, so long as it stays in place nothing is so safe as the side saddle. Hunk up on its pommel, the scarp properly adjusted, with three fingers space between knees and leaping horn, one simply cannot come off if the right heel is carried well back against the loins. Not if the animal is exactly in the clutch of the right knee and the saddle is long enough to keep your presence of mind, and come what may, you are planted firmly." "But the woman who wants nowadays to accompany husband, brother or father in all sorts of outdoor activities should expect to dress herself so that she will be not an embarrassment but a self-reliant companion." "The chief objection to the cross saddle is that it is unusual. It is rapidly overcoming that accusation. And there is this fact in its favor. Any one that can ride astride can also ride a side saddle. The converse is not true. And the deep seat—which is impossible on a side saddle—gives unity for good hands, arched chest and comfort."

The partisans of the cross saddle will have to admit that most of the men are arrayed against them. James T. Hyde, secretary of the National Horse Show Association, says that the management of the New York show is not inclined to let down the present bias against the women riders in the arena at the Garden. He admits that the managers have been criticised in some quarters and says that perhaps they are out of fashion.

S. W. Taylor, manager of the New York State Fair Horse Show, says that organization feels the same prejudice. Personally he recognizes certain advantages in the fashion of riding astride, but they are chiefly to the horse. He finds the side saddle as a rule more graceful and feminine. "So does Wilf P. Pond, who even goes so far as to doubt whether the horse himself is a great gainer by the use of the cross saddle by women. He says that a cross saddle must be made with even more attention to fit, and that if a woman were to ride well it will gall a horse's back, although perhaps the chances are not so bad as with a side saddle. All the journals devoted to horse matters are constantly receiving letters from the debaters of the question of "astride or astride." One Texas gentleman, named to a defense of the maligned West, writes to *Hill and Spur*:

"I notice that one of your correspondents says that the cross saddle may be better for the West, where women so frequently have ridden in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado and Texas, and the lady in the West who saddles her own horse is the woman who does so are just as plentiful in the East." "As to the comparative comfort and safety of the two styles I do not see how there is room for argument. If the side saddle really is more secure and more comfortable why do not men use it themselves? The fact is that the only reason women ride that way is because the men have habituated their ideas from a heavy old custom handed down from past generations. As for the appearance, even at the best a side saddle rider looks lopsided to me."

back a good player if he knows him till the one ahead gets further out of the way, which is the reason we like to have the same man on this job most of the time. But it was not the difference in players only which made the congestion and made us put Nos. 4, 6 and 7 on the ticket. "The links cover about 187 acres and are divided into three sections, the hill and the two meadows. Of course the hill, which comes first, is the hardest for beginners, and when some of us set out to learn just how to account for the unusual number of players who turned up at No. 7, say, at the same time we found that it was because there were more golfers passing that point in a given time than passed the starter."

Have to Stand in Line.

"A lot of the less experienced players, not wanting to wait their turn, skipped the first tee and the starter and butted in further along when they saw a chance. They don't do it any more, though. We now have a man stationed at Nos. 4, 6 and 7 as well as at the first tee and a player has to show his ticket to each of these as he progresses and have it punched. If he gets to No. 4 and it hasn't been punched by the starter the player is not allowed to go on. Suppose he shows No. 7 a ticket not already punched three times he had to go back."

"Another thing, if the time clock stamp on the back of the card shows that the player has not kept in line coming right along but has dropped out and dropped in again in some one else's place, he is turned back."

"No, nobody growls over the rule because each is mighty glad to have the protection for his own game. What is

reason that the starter keeps tabs on the players he passes along and calls out the numbers in regular rotation.

"On the busiest days we have to form the applicants in line, there is such a bunch of them waiting when the office opens at 8 o'clock. This applies to the owners of lockers too. No one can use the links without a stamped ticket obtained at the clubhouse office. This stops the practice of employees giving out private tickets to friends."

"Some of the married couples who play here are the most enthusiastic and more and more of these came Saturdays and Sundays last season. There are about 90 lockers for women and \$26 for men and all of them are always taken for the season at a charge of from \$5 to \$12, with the use of shower bath. The players who have a locker, though, are few compared with the players who don't have one, just as the number who play without the help of caddies is larger than the number who hire caddies."

"Probably there is no golf course in the country which is more particular about the kind of caddies it employs. If I hear of any complaint about one, I suspend him for a time or take away his license altogether. We have been criticised for allowing caddies to charge 75 cents a game, but it takes three hours to get around this course and I don't think that price is out of the way."

"The best amateur score for Van Cortlandt Park links is 72 strokes, held by Charles Marshall, and Gilbert Nichol holds the professional best, 65 strokes, with Joseph Sylvester 69 strokes."

"There were one or two men's tournaments held here last season and a ladies' tournament, which I think was the most exciting of all. You see it was a new thing up here, and bless me if I thought Mr. Abbott, secretary of the New York Golf Club, could find a dozen women who could put up a good enough game to enter the preliminaries. Instead of that there were about twenty who started out from here and finished the sixteen qualified."

"It took them about a week to get down to the finals and there was quite a gallery out watching them every day. The finals were played by Mrs. W. T. Ebert and Mrs. Bolton and Mrs. W. C. Ebert. Mrs. Bolton was won by Mrs. Ebert, who got a beautiful silver cup. There was a silver cup too which was played for by the beaten eight. I've forgotten who won it."

"When the links opened last May Mrs. Bolton appeared and told the golf teacher that she wanted to learn the game because her husband could play and she thought it would be fun to keep him company around the course some time. To quote the teacher:

"She had never had a golf club in her hands till she started in taking lessons. What she did not know about the game was wonderful."

"But Mrs. Bolton liked the game and after a few lessons practised faithfully on the links every day, with the result that when the women's tournament was planned in September she entered for the preliminaries and surprised even her teacher by reaching the finals."

"More women take lessons now at Van Cortlandt than when I first came here," Mr. Marrin said, "because there is a place on the parade ground where the lessons are given so that they won't interfere with the regular players. Half a dozen lessons do for some, many only take three and get a good start."